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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
09/912,306	07/26/2001	Takahiro Naka	107439-00049	8068

4372 7590 08/10/2004

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EXAMINER

DUONG, THANH P

ART UNIT PAPER NUMBER

1764

DATE MAILED: 08/10/2004

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary

Application No.

09/912,306

Applicant(s)

NAKA ET AL.

Examiner

Tom P Duong

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-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --
Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 26 July 2004.
- 2a) ☐ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 4 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 4 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☒ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☒ None of:
- 1) ☒ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 - 2) ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 - 3) ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- 1) ☒ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
- 2) ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
- 3) ☒ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date 2/27/03.
- 4) ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____.
- 5) ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
- 6) ☐ Other: _____.

DETAILED ACTION

Priority

This application filed under former 37 CFR 1.60 lacks the necessary reference to the prior application. A statement reading "This is a division of Application No. 09/725,808, filed 11/30/2000." should be entered following the title of the invention or as the first sentence of the specification. Also, the current status of all nonprovisional parent applications referenced should be included.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

1. Claim 4 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Beshty (4,946,667) in view of Tachihara et al. (6,536,748) and Lovercheck (4,424,771). Beshty discloses an apparatus (Fig. 1) for feeding a fuel (16) to a methanol reforming apparatus (18) that generates a hydrogen-rich gas (Col. 3, lines 15-17) by reacting a mixed gas of water, methanol and air on a catalyst (Col. 3, lines 15-40), comprising: a mixed water-methanol solution wherein the molar ratio of water/methanol is controlled to a predetermined value (Col. 3, lines 18-20) for use in reforming; a mixed water-methanol solution with molar ratio of water/methanol controlled to 4.6 or higher (Col. 3, lines 18-20). Beshty fails to

show a storage tank for the mixed water-methanol solution; however, Tachihara teaches it is conventional to provide a mixed water/methanol storage tank T (Fig. 1) and it would have been obvious in view of Tachihara to one having ordinary skill in the art to provide a storage tank for the feedstock (water/methanol soln.) as a means for storing the raw fuel. Beshty also fails to disclose a switching means that switches the mixed water-methanol solution tanks used as a fuel source according to the conditions of operation of the methanol reforming apparatus. Lovercheck teaches the switch selector 48 is provided in the reforming apparatus as shown in Fig. 2 to allow the selection of which fuel (fuel from tank 3 or tank 44) is to be used depending on the operational requirement of the reforming process (Col. 7, lines 30-43). Thus, it would have been obvious in view of Lovercheck to one having ordinary skill in the art to modify the apparatus of Beshty with a switching means as taught by Lovercheck in order to allow the reforming apparatus to select different fuel source depending on the operational requirement for the reforming process.

Conclusion

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Tom P Duong whose telephone number is (571) 272-2794. The examiner can normally be reached on 8:00AM - 4:30PM.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Glenn Caldarola can be reached on (571) 272-1444. The

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fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 703-872-9306.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).

Tom Duong
August 6, 2004

TD



Glenn Caldarola
Supervisory Patent Examiner
Technology Center 1700